

REMARKS

Claims 7 - 9 are added. Claims 1 - 9 remain in the case. Claims 1 - 2, 4 - 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Leonhard et al. (EP 0767088). Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Leonhard et al. in view of Rahmstorf et al. (U.S.P.N. 6,106,003).

The rejections to the claims are traversed.

The Examiner correctly points out that Leonhard et al. discloses a decorative film 16 which can be foam-backed and used in vehicle interiors. The Examiner then contends that the decorative film has in the penetration area of an airbag a break line predetermined by a cross-sectional weakness 12, the cross-sectional weakness being the side remote from the foam backing 18. However, the decorative film 16 in Leonhard is continuous throughout and nowhere has a break line been predetermined by a cross-sectional weakness. This weakness in Leonhard is in the foam backing 18 by means of the gap 28 and not in the decorative film as is required in the present invention. Further, it is not understood how the gap 28 within the foam packing 18 can be closed on the side remote from the foam backing as alleged by the Examiner. The Examiner further contends that the side of the notch facing the foam backing is closed at the surface by a welded region of an outer layer, consisting of thermoplastic material, of the decorative film 16. However, there is no notch facing the foam backing (since the gap 28 is in the foam 16) and there is also no welded region of an outer layer of the decorative film 16 disclosed. Therefore, the claims 1 - 6 are distinguished over the Leonhard patent and therefore believed to be allowable.

Claims 7 - 9 are added and require features not shown or disclosed in the prior art. Therefore, claims 7 - 9 are also believed to be allowable.

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This Amendment should place this case in condition for passing to
issue. Such action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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